

## TIPS ON EFFECTIVE PUBLICATION DESIGN

If you've made the decision to develop a printed piece for your program, the following tips might help you design the most effective publication possible. If you're having a professional design it for you, you'll be able to use these tips when you review the draft and before you approve it.

The written message ('text' or 'copy') is a sturdy foundation on which to build. If it's your job to write the copy, consider the following:

**THE READER:** Why would your reader be interested? What's the age? What's the gender? What's in it for them? Does your reader know anything about oil recycling already? How much attention will your reader give your message... ten seconds or five minutes? Get some good answers to these questions before you lay the groundwork. Research yields rewards. Be a flirt. Promise an interesting read. On the cover, use simple, eye-catching graphics and short title to attract attention and involve your reader.

**THE MESSAGE:** Write down everything that needs to be included, then simplify. Is there any duplication or tangled ideas? You know already that you want to encourage everyone to recycle their oil and oil filters. What are the benefits? What are the consequences of not recycling? What are the laws? Your goal is to get this information into your readers' heads *so they will choose to care for resources in a responsible manner*. As you copywrite and design, continue to check your "creativity"—your solutions—against this goal. Your decisions should be "under the influence," drunk with purpose.

- ✓ Outline the key concepts and points you want to convey.
- ✓ Highlight authentic motivational points.
- ✓ Are they in logical order?
- ✓ Get rid of any jargon or abbreviations.
- ✓ Clarify your message.
- ✓ What are the most important points?
- ✓ Can your reader get the main points easily?
- ✓ Is the text interesting?
- ✓ Use examples generously.

Group information into easily digestible chunks. Little or no fat, please. Simplify some more. It's a brochure, not a book.

Use headings, subheadings or lists to summarize your main points. In a list, "bullets" can be small round dots, or they can be other small graphics:

○ ♥ □ ● ① \* ✂ ✦ ➤ ☞ ✚ ◆ ☞ . How about a logo? ▲

End your brochure with some call to action: a phone call to the hotline, focus on a goal, adopt a new behavior, or some form of involvement.

You've finished the copywriting; the hard part is over. You get to switch hats from copy writer to art director.

**THE ART DIRECTOR:** Making it pretty is the glamorous aspect of your project. Following are a few guidelines.

**GENERAL STUFF:** Leave a gripper edge—a space of about 1/4 inch - between the image area and the edge of the printed paper. The press needs to pull the paper through the rollers and can't print where it's holding the paper. If you want the image to run all the way to the edge (called a 'bleed'), plan on printing on oversized paper and trimming back to the size of your printed brochure.

Use professional quality illustrations or photographs. Little Amanda's crayon efforts can really pack a wallop in a kids' art show brochure, but if your topic is nuclear physics, your selections should have an "engineer flavor."

Some paper is cheap, some expensive. A standard size usually is less expensive than custom-sized (for example, 8.5 x 11 inches rather than 10 inches square). Colored ink costs more than black. Two, three or full color costs more than one color. Are your color choices working towards or against your communication goals?

How many brochures are you going to print? A few hundred or a few thousand? Will it be hand delivered, a self-mailer or sent inside an envelope? If it's going through the U.S. Postal Service, discovering at the post office that your press run of 5,000 four-color, 17- by 2-inch trifold doesn't meet mailing requirements can be discouraging. And expensive. Just remember to consider all the variables at the onset of design, rather than right before distribution.

**BUILDING BLOCKS:** Typical parts of a brochure include body text (the words), headlines (title, sub-headlines), illustrations, photographs and one very important thing that you can't see. What is that mysterious item? It's called white space. You want lots of it in your brochure. Space. You won't get more for your money by filling up every last inch of paper. You'll get tossed out, unread. Cramming is for final exams, not brochure design.



Line Art



Photograph or halftone

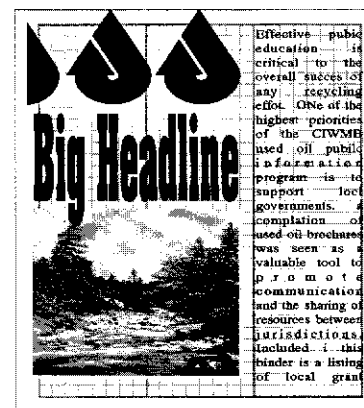
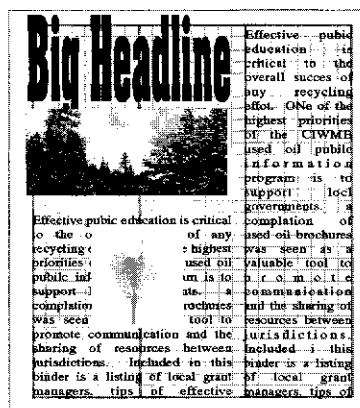
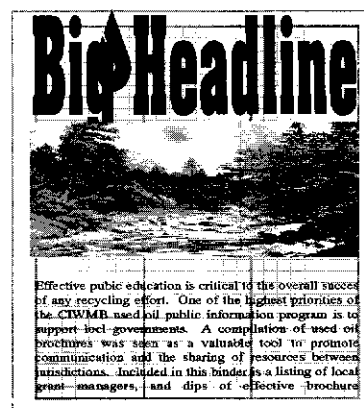
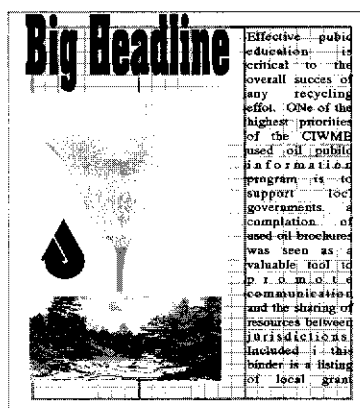
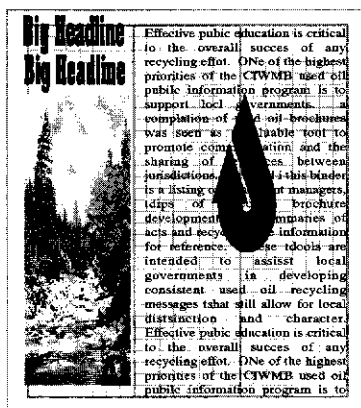


Line art illustration

This is a 'text block.' It's also known as 'copy.' But first, one more Planning Thing. How much money do you have? Some paper is cheap, some expensive. A standard size usually is less expensive than custom-sized (for example, 8.5 x 11 inches rather than 10 inches square). Colored ink costs more than black. Two, three or full color costs more than one color. Are your color choices working towards your goal or basically unemployed?

Text block

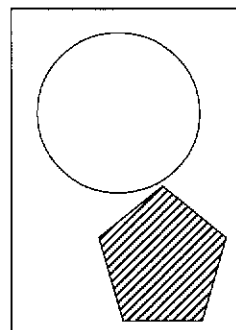
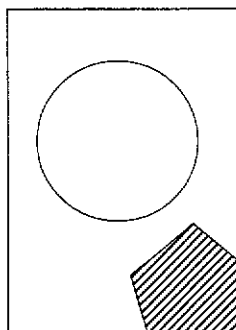
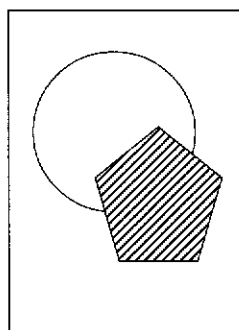
**ALIGNMENT:** What's that? Here's a professional secret that will launch you into a successful career as a designer. A grid is great for visual organization. That's right. A rigid up-and-down, left-to-right series of evenly spaced but invisible lines—used as "rectangular containers" for your components—makes your brochure both easy to read and lovely to look at. Balance is beautiful.



However you position the text, photos, et cetera, make it look like it was put there on purpose. It didn't just happen; it's not just floating there. Line it up carefully left to right and top to bottom, or make it definitely out of alignment.

Some guidelines to positioning and interaction of components:

- Overlap is good.
- Clearly apart is good.
- Almost touching is not good.



GRAPHIC DEVICES: Grab the reader's attention, build interest, move your reader through the text, or emphasize important points with graphics. There are many graphic devices that you, as the art director, can use, such as illustration, photography, enlarged letters.

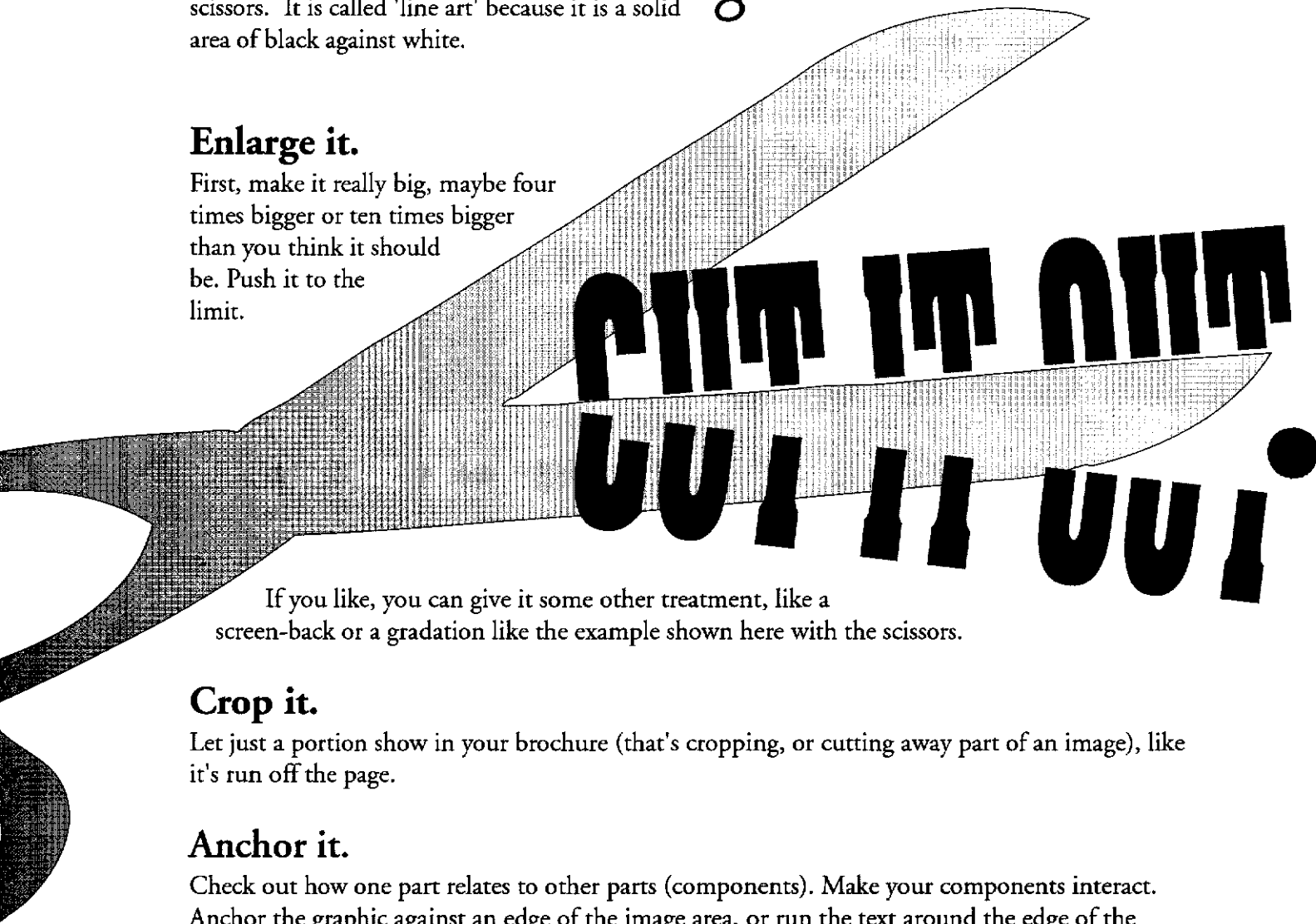
A few effective design tools are *enlarge*, *crop*, and *anchor*.

For example, here is an illustration of a pair of scissors. It is called 'line art' because it is a solid area of black against white.



### **Enlarge it.**

First, make it really big, maybe four times bigger or ten times bigger than you think it should be. Push it to the limit.



If you like, you can give it some other treatment, like a screen-back or a gradation like the example shown here with the scissors.

### **Crop it.**

Let just a portion show in your brochure (that's cropping, or cutting away part of an image), like it's run off the page.

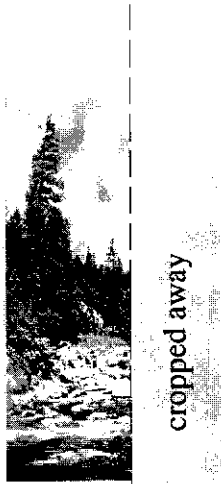
### **Anchor it.**

Check out how one part relates to other parts (components). Make your components interact. Anchor the graphic against an edge of the image area, or run the text around the edge of the graphic, use the graphic as a foundation for a headline. The components were meant to be in relationship. You be the matchmaker.

Illustrations and photographs are a little less flexible, but can be sized-down or cropped if the content is still clear.



full frame ---  
the entire image



strong  
vertical  
image

cropped away



traditional  
vertical  
image

cropped away



cropped away  
squared image

**TEXT CONSIDERATIONS:** You get to choose how to arrange the lines in a paragraph to give a formal appearance, for a friendly approach or to achieve other effects:

*justify (lines are equal length)*

[ ]

Justify. Now that's an interesting concept. Whatever does that mean? Life purpose? To show to be just, right, or in accord with reason? Hmmmmmm...to free from blame, declare guiltless. That's a tall order. Wait a minute, Here's another definition that might help: to adjust type by spacing so that the lines will be of the correct length. This one is justified; it's even on both sides

*Note: Be aware of uneven word spacing.*

*center each line*

] [

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*Note: Takes more time to read.*

*flush right, ragged left*

]

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*Note: More difficult for reader to follow.*

*flush left, ragged right*

[

Justify. Now that's an interesting concept. Whatever does that mean? Life purpose? To show to be just, right, or in accord with reason? Hmmmmmm...to free from blame, declare guiltless. That's a tall order. Wait a minute, Here's another definition that might help: to adjust type by spacing so that the lines will be of the correct length. This one is flush left, ragged right.

*Note: Usually the easiest to read.*

**WHAT'S YOUR TYPE?** There are thousands of different typefaces (fonts). Use no more than two or three. Times regular and Times bold count as one font. Times, Helvetica, Brush and Futura count as way too many fonts and will drive your reader crazy.

This is Times Regular; it is a serif typeface (font) and easy to read in text blocks

**This is Times Bold; an all around champion for both text and headlines**

*This is Times Bold Italic*

**This is Aachen Bold; a headline workhorse**

*This is Brush Script*

*This is Entsche Schreibschrift; elegant but tough to read*

This is Helvetica; a good one for signage, not so great for heavy text

**This is Helvetica bold; Helvetica is a san serif typeface**

This is Futura Light; like Helvetica, it is san serif

This is Palatino; a great text and headline font

There are basically two kinds of typefaces: serif and sanserif. Serif typefaces are characterized by small strokes that finish off the ends of the letters. Sans serif (from the french word *sans*, meaning *without*) typefaces lack these end strokes. For body text, serif fonts (like Times and Palatino) are easier to read than san serif fonts (like Helvetica). San serif is for sparse text, headings, or for signage. Is the text easy to read or just another pretty face?



Using a script style of font? Never, ever, don't even think about making the letters all capital. It looks like a plate of spaghetti and is difficult to read:

*YOUR READERS WILL GET A HEADACHE AND DEVELOP ATTITUDE. THEY WILL NOT SUPPORT ANY CONCEPTS SET FORTH IN THE BROCHURE. YOU WILL GET HATE MAIL AND BE ROUNDLY CONDEMNED BY OTHER DESIGNERS.*

ALL CAPITALS, EVEN IF THEY ARE NOT A SCRIPT FONT, ARE HARD TO READ BECAUSE THE HEIGHT IS ALL THE SAME. ALL CAPS are okay with short headlines or phrases. Guideline: use traditional Upper and Lower case for most headlines and body text.

It won't all fit? The text is the most fluid. Choose a smaller type size, or change the leading (the vertical space between lines of type), or use fewer words. You can always add more pages, but that's a major modification and costs a little more, due to more design time, more paper/printing costs.

*This is 12 point type with regular ("auto") leading*

It won't all fit? The text is the most fluid. Choose a smaller type size, or change the leading (the vertical space between lines of type), or use fewer words. Illustrations and photographs are a little less flexible, but can be sized-down or cropped if the content is still clear.

*This is 12 point type with 11 point leading. Same size type, but it takes less space vertically.*

It won't all fit? The text is the most fluid. Choose a smaller type size, or change the leading (the vertical space between lines of type), or use fewer words. Illustrations and photographs are a little less flexible, but can be sized-down or cropped if the content is still clear.

*This is 9 point type.*

It won't all fit? The text is the most fluid. Choose a smaller type size, or change the leading (the vertical space between lines of type), or use fewer words. Illustrations and photographs are a little less flexible, but can be sized-down or cropped if the content is still clear.

*This is 6 point type:*

It won't all fit? The text is the most fluid. Choose a smaller type size, or change the leading (the vertical space between lines of type), or use fewer words. Illustrations and photographs are a little less flexible, but can be sized-down or cropped if the content is still clear.

*Note: Best point type for body text is 10-12.*

Anything 14 points or bigger is called 'display type' and is good for headlines. Anything smaller than 14 points can be used for body text. Anything smaller than 6 points and you need a microscope.

THE PAPER CHASE: An embarrassment of riches, to be sure. You can collect and build a sumptuous collection of paper samples from the paper wholesaler, paper stores, trade shows, some print shops. But do remember your Big Goal: does it work towards getting the message across? Is it easy to open? Will it fold neatly? Is the size easy to read and file? Glossy or matte? Alluring texture or smooth and innocent? A wild color that will knock your socks off (and turn off the reader) or a more conservative neutral or white to avoid upstaging the text and graphic components? Does it contain recycled content? Is it recyclable? Choosing the paper, the size, the number of pages or folds, the format, the color of ink is a lot to think about. The choices are plentiful, so take careful consideration of all the elements. Envision the end result.